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Sen. Birkholz encouraged by governor's commitment to GOP vision of job creation and economic growth

Lansing – Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp) said she was encouraged to hear Gov. Jennifer Granholm's commitment to work with Republicans on creating jobs, spurring Michigan's economy and protecting the environment during her State of the State Address Tuesday night.

"I'm pleased the governor is focused on conservation issues," Birkholz said. "As chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, I'm looking forward to final passage of legislation regarding out-of-state waste and recycling."

Senate Republicans renewed their pledge to fight for every Michigan job and said they stand ready to work with the governor to accomplish what is right for the people of Michigan.

While the nation's economic recovery is well underway, families in Michigan are still too often facing the prospect of an unemployment check instead of a regular paycheck. In 2003, Michigan's jobless rate hit a 10-year high.

The GOP vision for Michigan includes providing a job opportunity for anyone who wants to work and support their family. It includes a great education for every student, affordable health care for families and senior citizens, and an opportunity for every Michigan resident to choose their own path.

"We must create Michigan's future, not just plan for it," said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema. "It's time to create jobs, it's time to help our economy grow – it's time to take action."

Sen. Birkholz agreed, citing the example from this past fall when the Republican-led Legislature took action on its JOBS package – Job Opportunities for Business Success. Each point of the JOBS package complements the others to jumpstart Michigan's weak job market and get Michigan's residents back to work.

(More)

The Senate has sent seven of nine initiatives from the JOBS package on their way to the governor. Work is already underway on the remaining initiatives as well as JOBS: Phase II.

“I’m happy the governor is committed to jobs and job creation, as this is a main concern for my constituents,” Birkholz said. “I’m especially pleased with the efforts to help small businesses, as they are the backbone of Michigan’s economy. We need to do more to help them grow, and help the entrepreneurs who are starting these small businesses.”

Sen. Birkholz said some of the governor’s proposals outlined in her speech have merit, but she needs to see the details instead of just a general idea.

“I’m hoping the governor’s plan to expand the early childhood reading program will take root,” Birkholz said. “This effort was tried in a few test sites a few years ago, but never took hold. My hope is to expand this program to every family across the state.”

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A photo of Sen. Birkholz at the State of the State is available for download on the Senate Majority Photowire at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop